

**Friendship Heights
Transportation Management District
Advisory Committee
October 12, 2010**

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Voting Members Present

William P. Farley (Chair)	Town of Somerset
Kerri Gates	The JBG Companies
David Glass	Chevy Chase Village Board of Managers
Cobey R. Kuff	Wisconsin Place
Ann F. Lewis	Friendship Heights Village
Bill McCloskey	Citizens Coordinating Committee on Friendship Heights
Robert Schwarzbart	Friendship Heights Village Council

Non-Voting Members Present

Ed Axler	M-NCPPC
Sandra L. Brecher	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

TMD Staff Present

Nakengi Byrd	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Jim Carlson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services
Sheila Wilson	DOT/Transit Services Division-Commuter Services

Absent

Julie Davis	Somerset House Management Assn.
Joe Dixon	GEICO
Tiffany Gee (Vice Chair)	Chevy Chase Land Company
Chief Roy Gordon	Chevy Chase Village Police
Capt. Russell Hamill	Montgomery County Police
Kenneth Hartman	B-CC Services Center

Guests

Bob Joiner	The Agenda News
Julian Mansfield	Friendship Heights Village

Abbreviations used herein include:

COG = Council of Governments
RFP = Request For Proposal
TERMs = Transportation Emissions Reductions Measures
TIGER II = Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery
TMP = Traffic Mitigation Plan

Item 1 & 2 – Introductions/Minutes Approval: Chair William Farley called the meeting to order. Members and guests introduced themselves.

Jim Carlson said the September minutes were ready (included in the meeting packet). However, there may not have been enough time for member to review the minutes, since the meeting packet was sent out later than usual. **Mr. Carlson** said the Committee had the option of postponing review and including both sets of minutes

(September and October) at the November meeting, something that has been done by other advisory committees. The second option is to take few minutes during the meeting to review the minutes. The decision is up to the Committee.

A motion was made to postpone the minutes vote until the November meeting; the motion was seconded. The Committee voted in favor of the motion.

Item 3 – Chair Comments: **Mr. Farley** said that, although he was unable to attend the September meeting except for a few minutes he could see it was going well. He expressed his appreciation that pedestrian safety was being discussed, since his community of Somerset has been very interested in the topic for some time.

Jim Carlson said the two speakers, **Jeff Dunckel** and **William Haynes**, provided an excellent overview of the County's pedestrian safety efforts.

Mr. Farley asked if there were new members. **Mr. Carlson** said there were two newly confirmed members – **Ed Axler** (M-NCPPC) and **Cobey Kuff** (Wisconsin Place). **Mr. Farley** welcomed the new members.

Item 4 – Traffic Mitigation Plans / Annual Reports: **Mr. Carlson** called attention to a summary sheet included in the meeting packet of all Traffic Mitigation Plans (TMPs) and TMP Annual Reports submitted by Friendship Heights employers. There were also printed copies available of the TMPs and Annual Reports, which provided report details. The Advisory Committee role is to review and recommend approval (or disapproval) of the TMPs and Annual Reports to the Director, Department of Transportation. The Committee recommendation is the penultimate step before final approval.

Mr. Carlson said the TMPs were the result of a law passed by the County Council requiring employers with 25 or more employees located in the County's transportation management districts to submit a traffic mitigation plan. The TMP consists of eight required elements (listed below) and a number of voluntary measures that employers are encouraged to implement:

Required Elements:

1. Designate a contact person to receive and distribute transit information
2. Post and distribute information on transit/pooling/other commute alternatives
3. Facilitate TMD staff presentations to employees on commute information on a periodic basis
4. Provide information on Guaranteed Ride Home (free regional program offering emergency rides)
5. Participate in the Annual Commuter Survey distributed to employees
6. Have Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) information on hand
7. Have a permanent display area for bus schedules and other transportation information
8. Compile information on yearly TMD activities and submit an Annual Report

Mr. Carlson said the TMP required measures are not unduly burdensome for employers. Virtually all of the measures are informational in nature, providing the County with a 'foot in the door' to the worksite for promotional activities so more measures can eventually be adopted.

Among the voluntary measures are those items that Commuter Services staff promotes in all of its interactions with employers, such as providing bicycle amenities (racks, lockers, showers), providing preferred spaces for carpools & vanpools, having car sharing spaces, providing flexible work schedules and telework, giving a transit subsidy or offering a pre-tax deduction to employees.

The TMPs and Annual Reports under review include one new TMP and nine Annual Reports. **Mr. Carlson** referred to the summary sheet and indicated that all except one of the employers reported fulfillment of the required elements and, in most cases, employers had gone beyond the minimum to provide additional measures.

The “Yes” response to Recommend Approval on the table below indicates that TMD staff has reviewed the submitted plan or report and is making a positive recommendation to the Committee:

Employer	Staff Recommends Approval	
1. TIG Global / TMP	Yes	
2. Saks Fifth Avenue / Annual Report	Yes	
3. GEICO / Annual Report	Yes	
4. Abacus Technology Corp. / Annual Report	Yes	
5. Washington Eye Physicians & Surgeons / Annual Report	Yes	
6. CapitalSource / Annual Report	Yes	
7. United Insurance Management / Annual Report	Yes	
8. Hess Egan Haggerty & L’Hommedieu	Yes	
9. Brighton Gardens at Friendship Heights / Annual Report	No	Has not participated in survey
10. Tiffany & Co. / Annual Report	Yes	

David Glass asked what County approval means in this case. **Mr. Carlson** said the County is essentially indicating that the company has complied with the law by implementing the required elements of the TMP. He added that there is at present no enforcement of the penalty for non-compliance, which is a misdemeanor punishable by a fine, but that at some point the County may begin enforcement action. **Sande Brecher** added that the monetary fine for a Class C misdemeanor, which is what non-compliance would entail, is \$35 per day.

Mr. Farley asked if there was any positive incentive for a company to submit a TMP – what are the advantages? **Ms. Brecher** said Commuter Services makes the case to employers that offering employees transit incentives makes the company better able to recruit and retain employees.

Bill McCloskey noted that the present summary list is not the entire universe of companies in Friendship Heights with 25 or more employees. **Mr. Carlson** said that there are more that still need to be identified and contacted, especially with the completion of Wisconsin Place and Chevy Chase Center. The challenge for the rest of the fiscal year will be to identify the existing eligible employers. There are several new restaurants, for instance – P.F. Chang’s and Capital Grille – plus other large employers such as Microsoft, which has agreed to submit a TMP but has not done so yet. **Mr. Carlson** noted that there are many small offices in the two large medical practice buildings that do not meet the minimum staffing threshold to submit a TMP. Although efforts will be focused on larger employers, smaller employers are also encouraged to partner with the County by submitting voluntary plans.

Mr. Carlson said most companies have found submitting a TMP to be relatively easy and employers receive assistance from Commuter Services staff. The real value of the plans is that it provides an avenue for the County to reach commuters about the region’s commuter programs.

Mr. Farley asked how “employee” is defined in this case. **Mr. Carlson** said that the term applies to both part time and full time employees that report to the work site. A company must have 25 or more employees on its largest shift to fall under the TMP requirement.

Mr. Carlson noted, in reference to the summary sheet under review, that one company – Saks Fifth Avenue – is recommended for a ‘conditional’ yes because they had not hosted a Commuter Information Day (CID) recently. This is due to Commuter Services staffing issues and not due to a refusal from the company.

Mr. Glass asked for a definition of Commuter Information Day. **Mr. Carlson** said the CID is an employee outreach event hosted at the work site by Commuter Services that promotes transit and other transportation

alternatives to employees. The typical CID, which is about two hours around the lunch time break, has giveaways and prize drawings and other promotions to attract interest in commuting alternatives. Staff also elicits contact information from commuters and tells them about carpool and vanpool options under the Washington Council of Government's (COG) regional rideshare database. Regional events such as Car Free Day and Bike to Work Day are also promoted at these events.

Robert Schwarzbart noted that in the case of one company, Abacus Technologies, the TMP summary indicates the company 'agrees to meet all required elements,' instead of the stronger assertion made about the other companies, 'meets all required elements.' **Mr. Carlson** said Abacus had not been supplied with the necessary brochures and other promotional materials and had not hosted a CID in some time; the company, however, is not refusing to comply with the TMP – this is due to Commuter Services staffing issues. **Mr. Carlson** will contact the company and update the transit materials and schedule a CID.

Mr. Carlson noted that Brighton Gardens at Friendship Heights – the one not recommended for approval – has not participated in the annual survey for 2009 or 2010, although it has complied with other elements of the TMP. Brighton Gardens may need a separate follow-up survey; or, as in years past, Commuter Services will be on site to distribute surveys. Staff has met with the company's human resource director and hosted a CID in 2009.

Mr. Glass suggested it would make promoting transit more effective if employers introduced it to all new employees. **Ms. Brecher** said that is also done and is one of the voluntary measures in the TMP.

Mr. Schwarzbart noted the contradiction that the transit system service is facing reductions at the same time that the County is encouraging more transit use. He added that the County cannot increase the use of public transportation if it is also not going to make it available.

Ms. Brecher said the challenge is to overcome the billions of dollars spent each year by the auto industry to get people to drive. Commuter Services obviously doesn't have that kind of money to spend, so the TMPs are a way to reach people through direct marketing.

Mr. Farley said he has encountered people on the bus who are unaware of the TRiPS Commuter Store. He suggests having drivers make periodic announcements about the store along their routes.

Mr. Farley asked for a motion to vote on the TMP recommendations. **Mr. Schwarzbart** made a motion to accept the recommendations of TMD staff as noted on the TMP summary sheet. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Glass stated he wished to amend the motion, to not vote on the TMPs, because he did not believe it is in the purview of the Committee to approve the TMPs. **Mr. Carlson** reiterated that the motion was not for a formal approval but is a recommendation only from the Committee. **Ms. Brecher** added that the Committee is an advisory body to the Director of Department of Transportation (DOT), so the motion to recommend was appropriate.

Mr. Glass said he was unsure what value the TMP provided or what the vote accomplished. **Ms. Brecher** said the law requires the companies to submit the plan and it is within the Committee's purview to make the recommendation to the DOT Director. Stepping back and examining the actual provisions of the law itself raises different questions, but at present the Committee is doing what every other advisory committee is charged with doing. Whether the law is necessary or not would have to be a separate discussion. A recommendation could be made about the provisions of the law or the wisdom of having the law on the books, but the Committee is at present charged with following the law. It is written into the County Code that advisory committees are appointed specifically for the purpose of advising the County Executive.

Mr. Schwarzbart said the vote being taken is consistent with past Committee votes, and it conforms to the charge of the Committee to weigh in on these issues.

Mr. Farley clarified, in the case of the Annual Reports, employers are not being required to do anything; they are simply reporting what has already been done. **Ms. Brecher** agreed and reiterated that employers are required to do only eight elements – the rest are voluntary.

Mr. Carlson added that the traffic mitigation measures employers implement are used in the Washington region's Transportation Emissions Reductions Measures (TERMs) formula, which is used in air quality calculations.

Mr. Farley asked for a second to **Mr. Glass's** motion – to not have the vote on recommending the TMP Annual Reports. **Mr. Carlson** added that the Committee's vote is valuable because it is the final step in the recommendation process. If, for example, he brought a TMP to the Committee from a company that did only six of the eight mandatory measures but he recommended it to the Committee anyway, the Committee could vote to not recommend the plan and **Mr. Carlson** would have to go back to the company to bring it into full compliance.

Mr. Farley reiterated **Mr. Glass's** motion: to not vote on the Annual Reports because it is outside of the Committee's purview. **Ms. Brecher** stated that the motion is improper because it asks the Committee to make a legal judgment about its advisory role. The County Attorney has expressly stated that it is within the Committee's purview to make the recommendations for the TMPs and Annual Reports.

Mr. Glass asked if he could obtain a copy of the legal opinion. **Ms. Brecher** said she would look into it, although for a variety of reasons these opinions have not been made available in the past.

Mr. Schwarzbart said the matter had received a full discussion and time was a concern.

Mr. Farley asked for a vote on the motion that the TMPs and Annual Reports be recommended to the County. **Mr. Carlson** clarified the Committee was recommending approval for one new TMP, eight Annual Reports and not recommending one report (Brighton Gardens), assuming the Committee accepts the staff recommendations on the summary sheet. **Mr. Glass** said the Committee is basically agreeing with **Mr. Carlson's** recommendations when the vote is taken. **Mr. Carlson** agreed and added that the DOT Director issues final approval.

Mr. Farley asked for vote on the motion by **Mr. Schwarzbart**, previously seconded, to recommend approval of the TMP and eight TMP Annual Reports.

Item 5 – Updates: **Ms. Brecher** briefed the Committee on Commuter Services and Ride On issues:

- Commuter Services participated in *International Car Free Day* on September 22nd. The County hosted events at five sites: Burtonsville Crossing (Silver Spring) and Kingsview (Germantown) Park & Ride lots; and the Bethesda, Silver Spring and White Flint Metro stations. The event was very successful and drew hundreds of interested commuters. The purpose of the event is to promote alternative commute modes – transit, carpooling, vanpooling, biking, walking, etc. – going 'Car Free' or 'Car Lite'. A Car Lite commuter uses their car to connect with transit at a park & ride lot, for example. The event is a way to say 'thank you' once a year to those commuters who are already car free, and to gain additional car free commuters.
- Also on September 22nd Commuter Services partnered with the Montgomery College Rockville Campus to host *Bike to College Day*, a student-initiated event which also included participation from faculty, to encourage more interest in bicycling. The campus has very constrained parking, so the college is very

interested in promoting alternatives. Faculty and staff also expressed interest in the event. One of the results of this effort is the formation of a bike club; there are meetings scheduled with the college to see if something similar can be started at the other campuses.

- **Ms. Brecher** said there was no news yet on the status of the bike sharing grant, the regional proposal to build a network of bike sharing facilities near Metro stations. Montgomery County participated in the proposal to implement stations at selected locations along the Red Line route. **Ms. Brecher** explained that bike sharing, like car sharing, is a program that allows for short term bike rentals. As a bike sharing member, you can check any bike out 30 minutes for free; beyond that, you would pay an additional amount. Bike sharing has become very high tech. **Ms. Brecher** referenced the recent roll out of bike sharing facilities in DC and Arlington. Montgomery County submitted a proposal under the TIGER II grant program (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) in conjunction with DC and Virginia. Bike sharing hubs consist of seven to 10 docking stations with a few empty spaces for bikes that are returned from other locations.
- The car sharing RFP (Request For Proposal) is progressing. Vendor selection has been made and CSS is in the process of making a formal recommendation to Procurement. The RFP is for the provision of car sharing spaces in the County's public parking facilities; this includes on-street parking, garages and lots. **Mr. McCloskey** asked if the County was considering car sharing sites on Friendship Boulevard. **Ms. Brecher** said the County was going to survey all potential areas, including Friendship Boulevard. It is still early in the process for identifying car sharing areas, since the vendor is not yet under contract, but Friendship Heights would be an excellent area for car sharing. **Mr. Schwarzbart** noted that there is very limited parking in Friendship Heights, and recent development has constrained it even further. He said the car sharing vendor would have to negotiate for spaces with the various commercial parking suppliers. **Ms. Brecher** agreed and said Zipcar had already contracted with JBG Companies for lot spaces next to retail development. Surface parking is preferable to garage parking due to occasional after hours restricted access to private garages and the need to communicate with their vehicles remotely – the garage structure can interfere with the signal.
- **Ms. Brecher** said Baltimore has just introduced the CharmCard which is interchangeable with SmarTrip and is accepted region wide for all rail and bus travel. **Mr. Schwarzbart** added that recent news indicates the company that manufactures the SmartCard may be going out of business. **Ms. Brecher** said Metro purchased the remaining SmartCard chips from Cubic Transportation Systems, the company with the proprietary technology used in their operation. Metro will transition to a new card system after the SmartCard stock is used up. The goal is to use an 'open architecture' type of non-proprietary software that will allow for easier changes and upgrades. **Mr. Schwarzbart** added that the CharmCard is less costly than the SmarTrip (\$2.50 v. \$5.00). **Ms. Brecher** said Metro had considered reducing the price of SmartCard; however, since the currently riders are allowed to exit the system owing fare it may not be in Metro's best long term interest to reduce the price – someone could purchase a fare on Metro exceeding the \$2.50 (the contemplated reduced price) and simply throw the card away, avoiding the additional price they would owe upon their re-entry into the system.. It is cheaper to buy another one than pay full price for the fare.
- **Ms. Brecher** said that by October 17th, SmarTrip cards will have the first regional bus pass loaded. To date, SmarTrip has been a straight cash fare deduction from the card – no weekly, daily or monthly passes. Regular users save a lot of money using passes. The pass is a seven-day regional bus pass. Bus passes on SmarTrip are valid for seven consecutive days of unlimited travel on regular Metrobus and regional bus routes, including Ride On. It continues to be a challenge getting the SmarTrip into the hands of riders, many of whom cannot easily afford to pay the \$5 price of the card; and even if the card is lost and the replacement value reloaded, the replacement price for the card is still \$5. The new pass is gate activated, so is not dependent on being used by a certain date. However, once the card is tapped

and the first ride used, the seven day time limit is activated. The passes can be downloaded to SmarTrip at the County's TRIPS Commuter Stores.

- **Ms. Brecher** said the County is entering the FY12 budget season, which is looking to be very challenging. As in years past, advisory committees will be meeting with the County Executive at the beginning of the year so TMD budget priorities will need to be discussed.
- The North County bus depot is still under study, with some environmental issues still to be worked out. Ride On sees this third depot as critical for managing the capacity of the system, to maintain service, reduce headways and contain costs.
- The first holiday schedule for Ride On is Veteran's Day; there will be some information coming out shortly.
- The printing budget is tight, so a number of Ride On bus schedules are out of print. The County is promoting the use of more online information and information for hand held devices. However, there is a lot of push back from the public because people tend to prefer the printed schedules; Transit Services is exploring a long term strategy to deal with it. The County at large has not yet reached the point where everyone has access to an online source. **Mr. McCloskey** asked if the schedules can be posted at the bus stops, as Metro does. **Ms. Brecher** said Ride On does have a program to make the schedules available. **Mr. McCloskey** said he had seen none in the Friendship Heights area.
- **Ms. Brecher** said the County is still working to put a real time bus display system into place, and efforts are underway to coordinate it with the state's Smart-Traveler system. The Silver Spring Transit Center is about a year away from opening, so the plan is to have a real time system in place in time for the opening. The County's real time system will interface with Metro's Next Bus system. A real time transit information system provides another important adjunct to the array of alternative driving choices the County seeks to provide. **Mr. Farley** noted that recent bus service cuts and investment in road construction seems to work against getting people to use transit. **Ms. Brecher** said that the goal of the County is to provide a balanced transportation system, so road construction will continue for the foreseeable future. And the service cuts, although they are regrettable and provide a greater incentive to driving, are necessary in the present budget climate. Ride On sought to minimize the effects of the cuts, but some customers will be affected negatively. **Ms. Brecher** said all buses in Montgomery County have bike racks, so some people may have the option of bicycling to a stop a little farther away; or, the region's carpool matching system is another option.
- The County's Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study is underway. **Mr. Carlson** said the Committee had received a briefing from **Councilmember Marc Elrich** last year. **Ms. Brecher** said this project, along with the Purple Line and Corridor Cities Transitway, will have an effect in Friendship Heights because the routes connect to areas with commuters who travel to the area. **Mr. Schwarzbart** asked if there would be money for the Purple Line. **Ms. Brecher** said it looks as though the Purple Line will be funded – there is money in the federal budget for New Starts projects, which will be the funding source. Although the upcoming gubernatorial election may affect the final outcome, at present the Purple Line is at the top of the state's projects list. Former **Governor Ehrlich** has gone on record as favoring BRT for the Purple Line vs. the light rail configuration favored by current **Governor O'Malley**; if the election goes to **Ehrlich**, then that will affect the route alignment. Neither has indicated opposition to the Purple Line.
- **Mr. Axler** said there is discussion underway in the County Council to reorganize Park and Planning based on service areas rather than functions – more on that in the future. There is also a new plan being used by Park and Planning called a "sketch plan" which is a type of pre-preliminary plan used to get

advisory input from the development community. **Ms. Brecher** said a sketch plan had been presented in connection with the Montrose Interchange development.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 AM
Next meeting date: November 9, 2010